

MARRIAGE AND SEX RELATIONS

833 a man named in different versions Uskawu and Manatchire, who
 773 came from a long distance on a raft. One version of the story
 continues as follows:

833 The people of Tsiraun took him and made him sit down on the front
 773 verandah of their chief's house. They gave him betel-pepper, and
 539 skinned an areca-nut for him. Then they brought a woman, and made
 her lie down, and told her to open her legs, so that he could dip his
 areca-nut into her lime-pot. But Uskawu said to them: 'You give her
 to me presently, by and by I will chew betel at night.' He was ashamed
 because of the woman's genitals. Then Uskawu took some real lime,
 and chewed, and spat out, and the men of Tsiraun thought he was
 throwing up blood.

Night came, and Uskawu copulated with the woman. The men of
 Tsiraun cried out: 'Oh look, the man has broken our carved lime-pot.'
 Then the woman became pregnant, and the child grew large inside her.
 The woman felt it, and cried. The men of Tsiraun wanted to get a
 knife and cut her belly. But Uskawu held her fast, and said: 'Leave her
 alone, I will look after her.' The woman felt the child. Then Uskawu
 took a piece of wood, a short thick piece, and the woman sat down on it.
 Then he held the woman, and she gave birth to the child.

The child cried, and all the people said: 'What are we to do now?'
 Uskawu said: 'You leave us alone. The child is mine. By and by his
 mother will give him milk.' They asked him about the child's food. He
 went to get some food and prepared it for the woman to make her strong.
 She ate some and gave some to the child.

That is how men learned to copulate at the pudenda, before this they
 only did it at the armpit.

833 The story of the man who thought his wife's genitalia to be
 773 a sore, and had to be taught how to copulate, which is the origin-
 myth current in New Ireland (Powdermaker, p. 242), is known in
 North Bougainville, but is told of an individual.

833 Coitus usually takes place in one of two positions. In the hut,
 the woman lies on the plank bed on her back, with the man over
 her. The women say that men sometimes lie so heavily on them
 [845] that they cry out. If she is known to be pregnant, he tries to keep
 his weight off her; failure to do so is supposed to result in the birth
 [362] of twins (see p. 164). It is difficult for a couple to secure privacy
 for their embraces, because there are nearly always several other
 people occupying the hut, which is not provided with partitions.

[839] They will wait till everybody else is asleep, but it is a favourite
 trick to pretend to be asleep and watch them. Or they will go to

a simple coconut leaf mat on the hard packed floor takes the place of these. Under and next to each bed a glowing and smoking coal fire is kept burning during the night--partially to warm the body and partially as protection against gnats. Since the previously mentioned entrance to the hut is the only opening, obviously only a little light enters. Moreover, the hut is completely darkened by the constant smoke, and it is very difficult to distinguish one thing from another inside this dwelling. 352 [354] 342

In this region the chieftains have no special houses, and there are likewise no special assembly houses like the ones we encounter farther to the south. If now and then a chieftain has a larger hut, then the front compartment is generally open, and the big wooden signal drums stand here. This place is also used as the council room of the old men or as the reception room for guests, and thus it substitutes for the taboo houses that will be mentioned later. 344 362●

In southern Bougainville as well as on the island of Fauro, the dwellings are frequently built on piles about three to four meters high; a ladder leads up to the door opening. Here the roofs are not so carefully constructed as in the north. The two flat sides are not rounded, and meet at a very obtuse angle. In addition to these pile dwellings there are also huts built on level ground. In the Shortland Islands the latter are more prevalent. 342 171

[18] Characteristic for this part of the islands, however, are the taboo houses and the large houses of the chieftains. - Coming from the north, we encounter the first so-called "taboo house" in the village of Toboroi on the east coast of Bougainville. The word "taboo house" is, strictly speaking, a false designation; it would be more correct to say "men's assembly house" since only women and children are forbidden to enter the building. These assembly houses are rather spacious buildings; the floor plan is a rectangle of 15 to 20 meters in length and 6 to 10 meters in width. The side walls are 2 to 2 1/2 meters high; the gable ends are open and the corner posts are sometimes carved--sometimes in the form of the human figure, sometimes in the form of a shark, but just as frequently the carving is a decoration consisting of zigzag lines, rectangles and other geometrical figures. On the side walls of the house tree trunks or bamboo canes are attached to one another to make a long bench; here the men and the youths squat or lie. The favorite place--I am almost 344 171